



Recommendations for child injury prevention

Governments and others are encouraged to act to address the epidemic of child injury and to consider the following seven recommendations from the *World report on child injury prevention* when developing child injury prevention programmes.

Key approaches to addressing child injuries

- ✓ Legislation, regulation and enforcement
- ✓ Product modification
- ✓ Environmental modification
- ✓ Education, skills development and advocacy
- ✓ Emergency care and rehabilitation

1. Integrate child injury into a comprehensive approach to child health and development

A comprehensive strategy for child health and development should include all leading causes of ill health and disability, and therefore should include injuries. The current renewed emphasis on primary health care provides governments with an opportunity to restructure child health programmes. The success of child health programmes should be measured not only by traditional measures of infectious disease mortality but also by indicators of fatal and non-fatal injury.

2. Develop and implement a child injury prevention policy and a plan of action

Each country should prepare a multisectoral child injury prevention and control policy that is linked to other child health strategies, with ambitious but realistic 5–10 year targets and adequate funding. The policy should take into account the needs of ALL children and promote the development of national standards and codes on issues that have a direct bearing on child injury.

3. Implement specific actions to prevent and control child injuries

Specific actions are needed to prevent and control child injuries and to minimize their consequences. These actions – forming a part of the national child health strategy – should be based on sound evidence, be appropriate in terms of culture and other local context, and have been tested locally. The evaluation of interventions should be an integral part of the programme.

“Implementing proven child injury prevention interventions could save more than a thousand children’s lives a day.”

*Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, WHO and
Mrs Ann Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF*

4. Strengthen health systems to address child injuries

Countries need to strengthen their health system capacity in order to provide the necessary care to injured children including pre-hospital care, emergency and inpatient treatment and long-term rehabilitation. Additionally the health system should also be strengthened to provide financial protection and social support to the families and households of injured children. This should be done in coordination with allied sectors to ensure holistic care and management of the injured child.



5. Enhance the quality and quantity of data for child injury prevention

Countries need a reliable yet simple and cost-effective injury data collection system which is (ideally) integrated into other child health information systems. Such a system will provide, not only a thorough understanding of the epidemiology of the problem but also the economic impact of injuries, the impact of national policies, the cost-effectiveness of interventions and the capacity of the health system to handle such injuries.

6. Define and support priorities for research

A research agenda for child injuries should be developed at regional and national levels. The agenda should be based on evidence from a broad range of sectors and include economic analysis, large-scale intervention trials and outcome evaluation. A critical mass of trained researchers needs to be built up in a range of disciplines ranging from epidemiology to policy analysis.

7. Raise awareness on and target investments towards child injury prevention

The fact that child injuries are predictable and preventable is often not understood by the lay public and policy makers alike. It is vital, therefore, that sustained awareness is created among communities, policy-makers, health care personnel and donors about its preventability in order to prevent the loss of healthy life in the youngest members of our community.

Remember to include children in decision-making as they can:

- ✓ act as role models by adopting safe methods to reduce injury risks - such as using safety devices and playing in safe locations;
- ✓ promote injury prevention among peers and family;
- ✓ refrain from engaging in high-risk behaviours;
- ✓ contribute to determining priorities for action;
- ✓ become involved in injury prevention campaigns and programmes.

Proven interventions for child injury prevention —

Road safety

- ✓ Minimum drinking-age laws
- ✓ Lower BAC limits for novice drivers and zero tolerance for offenders
- ✓ Child restraints and seat-belts
- ✓ Motorcycle and bicycle helmets
- ✓ Speed reduction
- ✓ Road user separation
- ✓ Daytime running lights
- ✓ Graduated driver licensing systems

Drowning

- ✓ Remove/cover water hazards
- ✓ 4-sided fencing around swimming pools
- ✓ Personal floatation devices
- ✓ Immediate resuscitation

Burns

- ✓ Smoke alarms
- ✓ Child-resistant lighters
- ✓ Hot-water tap temperature regulation
- ✓ Burns centres

Falls

- ✓ "Children can't fly" community programmes
- ✓ Product redesign
- ✓ Playground standards
- ✓ Window guards

Poisoning

- ✓ Remove toxic agents
- ✓ Child-resistant packaging
- ✓ Packaging of non-lethal quantities
- ✓ Poison control centres

"The *World report on child injury prevention* is a plea for evidence-based interventions and sustained investments by all sectors — public, private and civil — in injury prevention and control for children. It is time to unleash the promise of governments and create a world where children can learn, play, grow up and live without being killed or injured."